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THE CO-ORDINATION OF MUSICAL STUDIES

BY HERBERT ANTCLIFFE

IN all study, whether that of the scholar who is already a master of his subject and is pursuing his studies further for the fuller knowledge and benefit of mankind, or of that of the elementary pupil of a teacher who is himself a mere pedestrian practitioner, there are certain principles and certain methods which are necessary to success. They are of the very essence of successful study, because without them we cannot really be said to study at all. It is the very universality of this fact that causes me to lay before the readers of **THE MUSICAL QUARTERLY**, all of whom it may be assumed are students and many of whom are also teachers, the following notes on one of these principles; that of co-ordination.

The word co-ordination is one that is frequently misunderstood; almost as much as is the thing itself. It does not mean either comparison or combination, though both of them will from time to time be employed in it. Neither is the thing itself,—or it ought not to be, though it is often wrested so as to become so,—the antithesis of specialisation. The specialist is in need of co-ordination in his studies or his teaching as much as is the general student or practitioner; possibly more so. Co-ordination is the placing side by side of various matters, facts, ideas, views, in such a way that each will help the other. Two travellers over a stony pathway will help each other along; they will co-ordinate. But if they link their arms to combine their energy they may get in the way of each other, while if they are constantly comparing the progress of each with each, such progress will be slow. They will co-ordinate their separate powers by each giving a helping hand or a warning word to the other as occasion arises. And this is what co-ordination in music study must be; it must not necessarily be the uniting of several subjects or methods of study, but the adapting of each for the assistance of the other.

The study of music may be made from four main standpoints. These are (i) the purely æsthetic; (ii) the mechanical; (iii) the formal; and (iv) the historical. Of these the first is the most advanced and calls from the student for a considerable technical

knowledge of music itself, for a wide knowledge of and sympathy with art in general, a wide outlook on life, and some knowledge and appreciation of the main principles of psychology. "In its higher branches grammar touches psychology", says Prof. Gardner. But art, and especially the art of music, does more than touch it; it sinks deeply into and interprets the science.

The study of the mechanics of music, of its production and reproduction, is the most elementary, and includes everything from the simple playing of a single tune to the direction of a large orchestra or the performance of a great art-work. In some degree it is impartible to those least responsive to the higher qualities of the art, and by reason of the opportunities it affords for display it is one which has led to the greatest abuse.

The formal aspect is one which affects chiefly the would-be composer, and for similar reasons it has been abused only in a less degree than that of mechanics just referred to. Like all other sciences of construction, a knowledge of its principles is an aid to complete appreciation.

Last, but widest of all, is the historical aspect, which must of necessity be brought in to aid the others.

When these aspects of study are tabulated in this manner, the various ways in which the study of music may be co-ordinated with other studies, and in which they may be employed to assist in the study of music, appear plainly. But even with the great improvement in the intellectual and educational status of musicians which has taken place during the last half century or so, there is still room for a greater and more intelligent interest on their part in the other arts; and still more is there room for a more complete co-ordination with their own subject of the knowledge they possess of other subjects.

It will save some overlapping and repetition if we treat the subject first from the point of view of the teacher, for the student after all is a teacher for himself, fulfilling the dual rôle, frequently to so marked a degree as to be almost a dual personality. First of all, then, we must look at the subject from the point of view of the professional teacher.

In considering the general work of a teacher of music the first question to be asked is, What is the object which the individual teacher has in view in practising the profession? Of course, in ninety-nine cases out of every hundred the most obvious and honest reply would be that we practise it with the object of earning a livelihood in the manner for which nature and our circumstances have most fitted us—in other words, along the line of least

resistance. To suggest that the aim, at least in the first instance, was any higher, would be mere professional or social snobbery. It is difficult to imagine anyone who is free from this necessity taking up the profession of a teacher as we usually understand the term, interesting and even fascinating as it is in many of its aspects. I remember a certain examiner of teachers in other subjects than that of music who was very fond of impressing upon his examinees the nobility of their calling, who almost invariably asked what was the object the examinees had in taking up the profession. Naturally it was not very long before he was found out, with the result that there was always some reply ready as to an affection for the dear children, or some philanthropic desire. Suddenly, however, he changed his tactics. Assuming that their intentions were good he mentioned to each one a place where there was difficulty, for monetary reasons, in getting teachers, and asked each if he or she would be willing to go to this most interesting place. "Then they all with one consent began to make excuse".

But, once having chosen the profession for economic reasons, we can set out to see what should be our objects apart from the aspect of its direct personal usefulness to ourselves.

The primary object of teaching, obviously, is to impart knowledge—that of the music teacher to impart a knowledge of how to construct or to interpret or appreciate music. Low as is this aim, it involves, as part of the general education and upbringing of the child, aims of a noble character and tasks which are some of the most difficult in the world. On this subject I may be allowed to quote from a pamphlet on the subject of "The Successful Music Teacher", which I wrote some years ago at the request of a well-known firm of music publishers.

The development of artistic taste and ability may, and usually does, mean the awakening of ideas and aspirations to which the mere worker with no desires except to earn the means for comfort or luxury is an entire stranger. If the tuition given and the influence exerted by the music teacher do not assist this to a considerable degree, they fail in their purpose, and would be better left alone. One reason why there are so many dull pupils and so many disappointed teachers is that so many of the latter forget that their chief business is the encouragement and development of the pupils' artistic instincts, and not the mere imparting of certain rules and methods. They remember too well that they are teachers, and too often forget that they are artists and human beings. They do not 'hitch their wagon to a star' and keep it securely fastened there. Consequently they lose their hold of the higher ideals, and become prosaic and uninterested. Their pupils may pass examinations and perform brilliant feats of technique, but there is not the healthy enthusiasm for their own and other peoples' music, and the bright, clear-minded and

whole-hearted love of life in its fulness that an art should create, or at least, should encourage.

Yet, because it is idealistic, the profession of a music teacher must be more rather than less practical. The study of art should help to bring about a perfect balance of mental and moral conditions. It is a great mistake to assume that the constant exercise of artistic functions brings about a lack of balance in these respects. If it does so, these functions are being exercised wrongly. Genius in any one direction may overbalance ordinary powers in others, with a result that peculiarities appear and rapidly develop into social and physical eccentricities; but the man of genius is an infinitesimally small factor in the community, and even he is frequently less successful in the important things in life—in life itself—because this lack of balance is increased instead of being diminished by the manner of his education.

This therefore stamps the second object of music teaching as the adjustment of the balance between artistic sensibility and practical everyday life.

Still more important is the expansion and development of all the powers of mind and soul possessed by the pupil. Teachers whose aims are merely utilitarian are on a road that leads to soul-destruction in themselves and their pupils; especially when the subject they teach is one of art. Equally so are those who aim at unified and equal success. The standard and nature of the success achieved by different pupils must be as varied as is the nature of those pupils. Some have highly specialised powers which enable them to stir the hearts of multitudes; others will never afford serious pleasure or edification to any except themselves. Yet we may hope and expect that all will do their work in life, however artistic or however inartistic it may be, better and with greater pleasure and benefit to themselves and to others for the way in which we have made them see and feel the powers and responsibilities which lie within them.

Having then these high aims before us, the question resolves itself into that of how we are to attain them; and the answer in brief is, "By making our tuition as intensive and wide an education as possible."

We must, however, first of all apply this to ourselves; for if we succeed in this it will follow as an inevitable consequence that we shall also apply it to our pupils. A well-known teacher of music in England, Dr. Walter Carroll, recently declared that the unfolding of personality is to be the aim of every teacher; that is, the unfolding both of his own personality and that of his pupils. Now there is no personality which is entirely and exclusively musical; even those who have tried their hands and brains at other arts

and other professions and have failed signally are not so narrow as all this. Therefore this eminent teacher suggests that "every opportunity should be taken of hearing good performers in opera and drama, and teachers should make a point of being present whenever a meeting is addressed by a speaker of marked personality. As a direct stimulus lessons in Elocution, combined with Gesture, are of the greatest benefit".

Further than this I would go, and say that every musician, and most of all every teacher of musicians, should study these subjects as thoroughly as possible, applying to them in its fullest degree his critical faculty, and comparing them in principle and in detail with his own subject.

Teaching in general, according to the late Dr. Creighton, "is really a process of introduction; each individual child has to be introduced to knowledge". The object of teaching, he thought, was to establish a vital relationship between knowledge and the pupil, "on an intelligible basis. This can only be done, in the case of the pupil, by appealing to two qualities which are at the bottom of all knowledge,—curiosity and observation".

This is a very important point with music teachers, for so many fail to bring about any vital relationship, failing to arouse either curiosity or observation. Co-ordination between music and other studies is one of the most effective methods of arousing these qualities.

Because music in its essence is an emotional art, its relation with the purely intellectual or scientific pursuits which are commonly called 'education' is sometimes remote and difficult of apprehension. Even non-musical educationists, however, admit the useful qualities of music for physical drill and other sensuous purposes. Through some psychological freak the possibilities of the study of music as an aid to other studies seems to have been overlooked by general educationists. Music has been employed in conjunction with words, (usually with verses of a feeble character), to impress on the memories of young children facts which they might otherwise too readily forget; but in its higher and broader aspects, and in its relation to more advanced studies, the utility and effectiveness of the study of music has been too much neglected, often to the extent of being entirely ignored. Unfortunately the blame is not to be borne altogether by the non-musical educationist, for in the past the musician has been very culpable in this matter, and still is so to a certain extent to-day. Too often the music teacher is blissfully unconscious of the psychological problems presented to him by those whom he has to

teach, and of the necessity of knowing each of his pupils as a complete and separate individual with a nature and interests different from all others, and with interests and potentialities outside the mere study of music, yet which have a bearing on his music study. Much has been and is being done, however, to remedy this, while still more seems likely to be done, largely through the efforts and influence of individual teachers. How much we owe and always must owe to the individual teacher, in school or college or engaged in private practice, will probably never be fully recognised.

We are not now concerned so much with the co-ordination of music with other subjects as that of the various branches of music itself. Even this is not altogether an easy matter, particularly for the specialist, who is concerned chiefly with the application of certain detailed principles or the production of definite results. It is one of the dangers and drawbacks of specialisation that this co-ordination frequently becomes almost impracticable, and one cannot help regretting from time to time that so many excellent all-round musicians prefer to act as specialists. I am not condemning the specialist as such, of course, for he has his place, which cannot be filled by the general practitioner; but there is no doubt that too many attempt to become specialists, and thereby cause a great narrowing down of studies. In colleges and schools, where a number of specialists are working together, and with teachers who are not specialists, this co-ordination is not so difficult. Personally I have found it most easy in teaching young children or pupils who are well advanced in their principal subjects.

With regard to the former it is well to remember that song is the basis of all music. It is well in teaching children to combine some tuition in singing with lessons on the pianoforte, for instance; besides, of course, the absolutely necessary instruction in reading music. This has the great advantage of helping the development of the sense of rhythm through two different channels. A child will sing rhythmically where the mechanical difficulties of playing prevent it playing rhythmically. Consequently the combination of singing and playing, and of words and music, will frequently maintain the interest which otherwise would flag, while the method is unexcelled as an aid to the memory.

Interest and memory re-act one on the other to a very large degree. We find an interest in what readily occurs to the memory, and we remember that in which we are most interested. Practically every teacher consciously and purposely makes use of a child's memory in teaching music, but not all do so in the right

way; too often it is used in place of rather than as an aid to the intelligence. The co-ordination of memory and intelligence is the most important of all co-ordination; without it we can do nothing. All other co-ordination depends upon this. We must therefore employ in more or less close conjunction the studies which aid each of these.

The next broad principle is the co-ordination of Interpretation and Appreciation. Here again we must make it a matter of the broadest principle, to be employed in no narrow or individual sense. We must allow our ability at interpreting Chopin's Nocturnes to aid our appreciation of Pachmann's rendering of them; and *vice versa*. But we must go further than this; we must make our appreciation of Pachmann's Chopin playing assist our interpretation of Bach's fugues and Handel's oratorios, and whatever else we have to present. Stewart Macpherson has spoken in some of his lectures of the appreciative aspect of study, but I am not sure that even he makes it clear how necessary real appreciation is to true interpretation. In this new and great wave of enthusiasm for the teaching of musical appreciation there is, I fear, a certain danger. We are apt, in remembering that many of our pupils will always be listeners rather than performers, to forget that after all our first duty is to teach them to play or to sing. We must, of course, use the teaching of interpretation as a road towards true appreciation. Yet, anomalous as it sounds, it is an important principle of all teaching that, while interpretation must lead to appreciation, appreciation, that is the appreciative powers of the pupil, must always be in advance of interpretation.

Those who make a great point in the general teaching of what we conveniently call Appreciation, or who teach it as a more or less independent subject, rely very largely upon the constructive character of music; upon the way in which it is put together. This is not unimportant in any case, and we ought always to insist upon some knowledge of this not only being acquired but also being applied. We ought to be able, as is done by Clarence G. Hamilton in his little book on pianoforte teaching, to remind ourselves that "we are employed to teach a specific subject, and that the limitations of our time do not permit us to plunge into other troubles", and yet go on to compare the works which are set out for study with other great art-works, and to derive some power of interpretation and appreciation from such comparison.

Among teachers and pupils of melodic subjects such as singing and violin playing, "harmony" is neglected even more than is

"form". Yet this is not as it should be. The violinist should know something not only of the formal structure of, say Bach's Chaconne, but of the harmonic structure of that and similar works, and of the accompaniments of works in which he is the soloist and of chamber and orchestral works in which he takes a more or less insignificant part, while without a recognition of the close union of harmony and rhythm there is necessarily a short-coming in the appreciation, and consequently in the interpretation.

In my own student days, and since then with a large number of my own pupils, the direct combination of pianoforte and orchestral study has proved very beneficial. To the pupil who is sufficiently advanced to play concerti and other accompanied works in public this will follow as a matter of course. But the pupils to whom I now refer are those of much less advanced technic, whose public appearances will be rare and of a very minor nature; pupils who at the most are playing the more difficult of Mendelssohn's "Songs without Words", or works of equal difficulty. A realisation of the orchestral possibilities of a pianoforte piece means a considerably enhanced realisation of its contrapuntal construction, and most important of all, of its tonal possibilities. At the same time the practice of condensing larger scores, and of playing from four or five staves (which is as far as the majority of such pupils will go) will assist in arriving at a unified conception of larger works.

The wide aspect of general history is one which must be brought in and co-ordinated with music in its historical and artistic aspects. It is to be feared that few teachers really teach even the history of music to their pupils unless there is some direct object in view in doing so. When it is a case of preparation for examination, dates and facts, biographical or æsthetic, are crammed into the heads of the candidates, and rarely is more than this attempted. I am not unmindful of the growing custom of giving the years of birth and death of a composer and of the composition of the work in many editions of the classics and in concert programmes. If the teacher draws the attention of his pupils to the characteristics of the period displayed in the individual work, and to the influence of that work, and of others by the same composer or dating from the same period, on those characteristics, this custom may not be without some small value. In itself it is of little or no value, and may be actually harmful, for dates not supplemented by actual musical knowledge easily prove pitfalls even for the wary. If, however, (to give very

rough illustrations), our pupils know that the style which we call Handelian developed from the earlier style of Purcell and Blow combined with contemporary German and Italian styles, that the music of Gluck and Meyerbeer and Weber was the result of a revolt against Italian formalism, and that from them Wagner and his followers down to the beginning of the twentieth century have developed their theories and practice,—if they realise these and similar facts, it matters little what year any of the composers were born or died, these dates being only reminders of such facts.

Those who are pianoforte teachers will perhaps follow a somewhat different line of history, starting from the two great families of Bach and Scarlatti and their English contemporaries and proceeding through Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Weber, Schubert, Field, Chopin, Bennett, Mendelssohn and Brahms to the composers of to-day. Exactly what line of history we follow, however, the principle must always be the same; we must apply it to the work done, making the music itself the history, and the historical method merely a means of learning the fuller significance of the music and the way to overcome its difficulties.

The question of a second subject for a pupil is always a serious one, because of this very question of co-ordination. Some teachers do not regard this question with the seriousness it deserves, but make that of the first study not only paramount but absolutely exclusive of all others. They look upon the question of a second subject rather as one of relief from the difficulties of the first than as one which may have an very important bearing on the whole of the student's artistic life, if not of his livelihood. There are various reasons why a student of music should take up two subjects, two instruments or singing and an instrument, as matters of first-rate importance. Perhaps the most obvious is that in boyhood and girlhood it is scarcely possible to decide at once what is the most suitable means of expression of the individual temperament. It is by no means an uncommon experience for a young artist to find that it is in his second subject he is ultimately best able to do justice to his natural powers and to give the greatest pleasure and edification to others. From the economic point of view, of course, the "double-handed" musician is more likely to gain a livelihood than is the one with only a single instrument to play and a single subject to teach.

But it is for neither of these reasons that I say every student of music, whatever his or her object in becoming so and whatever the degree of proficiency already attained, should have a second

subject, and that not merely what is generally known as "theory". Outlines of harmony should certainly be studied by all who would make any real progress in the art of music, but in addition to this some further practical work should be undertaken. We can never grasp the full significance of the music we ourselves perform, or in which we have a part, unless we have some practical knowledge of other things that are going on, of other possibilities of the art, of other means of expression, than our own. It is by constant co-ordination of these matters that we become or remain artists rather than mere executants.

The essence of teaching, the real instruction and inspiration afforded is, of course, in all cases the same. But the circumstances are different in every individual case. These differences we can and do group: and the two main groups relate to those of the amateur and the professional. With the professional pupil it will be, or should be, the most natural thing in the world to co-ordinate the whole of his studies. If he be a pianist his studies in composition will turn in the direction of his instrument, and he will probably "compose" weird and wonderful pieces that his teacher will find difficult to construe, and which will be vastly different in appearance, if not in principle, from the services and voluntaries composed by his organist friend. He will, if both of them are wise, discuss the whole of his work and his hobbies with his teacher, when opportunity arises, and the teacher will make as many of such opportunities as possible consistent with the non-interference with properly regulated tuition. There will be nothing that has not some bearing on his musical studies, and his best friend in all his affairs will be his master.

Such conditions may be complicated by the fact that for different subjects he is under the direction of different masters. This, however, need be little hindrance, for the pupil will form a useful basis of intercourse between the different teachers, who by comparing notes as to his studies and personality will benefit both themselves and their pupil.

This also may obtain to a certain extent with the amateur, though it is to be feared that the majority of teachers have their connections almost entirely among people who can afford or are willing to pay only a single teacher for a single subject. Apart from this, also, the non-professional pupil does not desire to spend either money, time or energy in the serious development of a single art. The question therefore of secondary subjects can usually come in only as ancillary to the principal subject. It is well to insist on some knowledge outside this subject, however, even

though it involve the curtailment of time devoted to the subject originally contracted for.

The manner of proposing this will vary considerably, and generally should be in what may be described as "tactful effrontery", which is the quality most essential after that of technical knowledge, in all businesses. Exactly how it is to be applied is a matter for each individual teacher in each individual case, but it can usually be done insidiously rather than openly. Method, order, system, however, are necessary both with professional and amateur pupil, and in every cases definite, if unwritten, rules must be followed. "Co-ordination", an English journalist has recently said, "is distillation, and the result precipitates a system as inevitably as the distillation of one chemical precipitates another".

A point which must not be overlooked in the selection of exercises, studies and pieces, (and this refers to our own study as well as our teaching,) is the relation these individual works bear one to another. They should be chosen so that full use of this relation may be made for either technical or artistic reasons. Indiscriminate choice is like "browsing" in a library; it serves its purpose at times but must not be overdone. In the majority of cases probably the teacher does not choose them at all, but takes those chosen by some college or board of examiners. If necessity compels serious attention to examinations this is quite right. But even then these questions of co-ordination remain and are further involved by the fact that the teacher must correlate his ideas with those of the examining authorities. This means careful study, on the part of the teacher, of the pieces selected, with a view to seeing why, if any reason exists, these particular sets are made up. In many cases it is difficult to see why certain pieces are grouped, but we have to assume the wisdom of those in authority and act accordingly. Where there is more complete control of choice by the teacher this is easier and may be made much more beneficial. Examinations are of necessity arranged with an assumption of a more or less equalised ability; while many students vary considerably in the different sections of their work. The pianoforte pupil with a brilliant finger technic will often lack a complete sense of rhythm or the ability to apply it. The one with romantic tendencies and expressive ability will possibly lack digital agility. And other similar discrepancies in almost endless variety constantly occur.

To make up these discrepancies is the object of the co-ordination between the study of these various pieces, and it will require only a careful selection and proper arrangement of lessons

and practice to bring about a due balance between artistic perception and technical ability.

As to the co-ordination of our personal studies the great thing to remember is that the whole life of the artist and the teacher is one of unending self-teaching. Co-ordination in this matter is much easier than the co-ordination of the studies of others. So easy is it in its more obvious aspects that all exercise it to some extent. Its deeper and more serious aspects are such, however, that we rarely give it the consideration it deserves; we do not exercise it in such a way as to miss no possible point of contact. This is to be done not merely by allotting a certain portion of each day to practice, to reading, to composition or to definite preparation for our professional work. It is only to be done thoroughly by getting into the habit of sitting down regularly each day and thinking out in broad principle and in detail what relation the different parts of our work bear to one another. It is not an easy thing to do; but of its beneficial results I can speak strongly from personal experience.

It is only by bringing about as complete a co-ordination as possible between all our studies that that "vital relationship" spoken of by Dr. Creighton can be created or made significant. If this is done the rest will be easy.